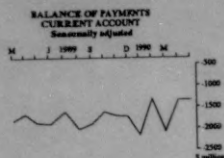


# Statistics Weekly

Thursday, 5 July 1990

## *The week in statistics ...*

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## Current account deficit steadies in May

The balance of payments current account deficit for May 1990 was \$1,343 million in seasonally adjusted terms, marginally lower than that for the previous month.

Seasonally adjusted imports and exports fell by 6 per cent and 7 per cent respectively, causing the seasonally adjusted balance on merchandise trade to swing from a slight surplus in April to a deficit of \$24 million in May. Partly offsetting this was a small improvement in the income deficit.

For the eleven months ending May 1990, the current account deficit (in original terms) was \$18,857 million, up \$3,122 million (or 20%) on the corresponding period in 1988-89. The increase was the result of higher deficits on net income, up \$2,324 million (20%), and on net services, up \$944 million (41%). The larger net income deficit was due to increased interest payable abroad.

In original terms, the current account deficit for May 1990 was \$1,550 million, up \$598 million on April, mainly due to a \$543 million turnaround in the balance on merchandise trade to a deficit of \$179 million.

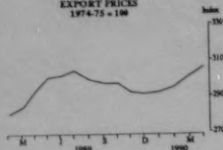
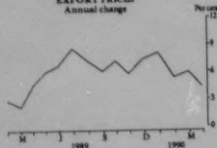
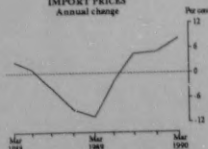
Imports rose \$328 million (or 9%) with increases recorded in all groups except transport equipment (where no civil aircraft were recorded following the import of a \$164 million aircraft in April). The largest rises occurred in 'other' manufactures, up \$129 million (18%) and machinery, up \$109 million (9%).

Rural exports rose \$23 million (2%). Non-rural exports decreased by \$238 million (8%) due to a fall in metal ores and minerals.

BALANCE OF PAYMENTS, CURRENT ACCOUNT  
\$ million

	April 1990		May 1990	
	Original	Seasonally adjusted	Original	Seasonally adjusted
Balance on merchandise trade	364	27	-179	-24
Net services	-227	-254	-279	-255
Net income	-1,340	-1,361	-1,309	-1,304
Net unrequited transfers	251	240	217	240
Balance on current account	-952	-1,348	-1,550	-1,343

For further information, order the publication *Balance of Payments, Australia* (5301.0) or contact either Zia Abbasi on (06) 252 6689 or Neil Batty on (06) 252 5540.

EXPORT PRICES  
1974-75 = 100EXPORT PRICES  
Annual changeIMPORT PRICES  
Annual change

## Export prices continue rise

Export prices rose by 1.7 per cent in April 1990, following a 2 per cent rise in March. Despite these two rises, the annual rate of increase in export prices reached its lowest point for 13 months, being 4.4 per cent in the year to April 1990.

Approximately half of the items in the index recorded price increases in April, the main ones being iron ore and concentrates, zinc ores, concentrates and alloys and lead and lead alloys. About 40 per cent recorded price decreases, the main item being wheat.

The table below shows the wide divergence in the price changes for the different broad groupings of products.

EXPORT PRICES, APRIL 1990  
Percentage change

Commodity	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Food and live animals	-0.4	7.4
Crude materials	3.9	1.5
Mineral fuels	-0.7	17.7
Animal and vegetable oils	-4.0	-11.0
Chemicals and other manufactured goods	1.6	1.0
All exports	1.7	4.4

For further information, order the publication *Export Price Index, Australia* (6405.0), or contact Peter Cordy on (06) 252 5541.

## Import prices rise

Import prices rose by 1.7 per cent in the March quarter 1990, influenced by the fall in the value of the Australian dollar against most of our major trading currencies except the Japanese yen.

Petroleum and petroleum products (up 7.7%) again made a major contribution to the overall increase, while machinery specialised for particular industries (up 4.1%) also contributed significantly.

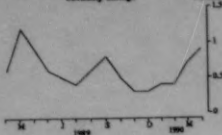
These increases were partly offset by price decreases for some other imports, especially road vehicles (down 1.1%).

IMPORT PRICES, MARCH QUARTER 1990  
Percentage change

Selected items	From previous quarter	From corresponding quarter of previous year
Food and live animals	-2.2	0.3
Crude materials	-0.7	9.8
Mineral fuels	7.7	36.3
Chemicals	2.3	3.4
Manufactured goods	1.7	8.9
Machinery and transport equipment	1.2	5.6
Miscellaneous manufactured goods	1.2	7.2
All imports	1.7	8.4

For further information, order the publication *Import Price Index, Australia* (6414.0) or contact Geoff Brown on (06) 252 5348.

HOUSE BUILDING MATERIAL PRICES  
Monthly change



PRICES OF NON-BUILDING  
BUILDING MATERIALS  
Monthly change



## Faster growth in building material prices

Both house building materials and materials used in other forms of building increased by 0.9 per cent in April 1990.

The main price increases in house building materials were for plaster and plaster products, structural timber, electrical cable, and builders hardware.

For materials used in buildings other than houses the main price increases were for reinforcing steel etc., conductors, and elevators and escalators.

The April monthly increase was the highest in 12 months for house building materials, and for 7 months in the case of materials for other buildings.

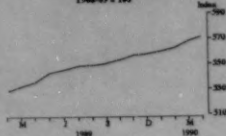
Over the year to April 1990 prices for house building materials increased by 6.7 per cent and prices for materials used in other buildings increased by 7.8 per cent. In the case of materials used in house building, this continued the downward trend in the annual rate evident since October 1988. For materials used in building other than houses, the annual rate of increase has been relatively stable for the past five months.

PRICES OF BUILDING MATERIALS, APRIL 1990  
Percentage change

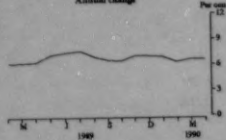
City	House building		Other than house building	
	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Sydney	1.1	7.2	0.9	8.2
Melbourne	0.5	4.7	0.6	6.6
Brisbane	0.7	7.6	0.8	9.4
Adelaide	1.1	7.0	0.8	7.8
Perth	1.2	8.9	1.4	8.4
Hobart	0.3	6.2	0.4	5.6
Weighted average of six State capitals	0.9	6.7	0.9	7.8
Darwin	— not available —		0.7	5.8
Canberra	0.5	7.1	0.8	8.4

For further information, order the publications *Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building*, Eight Capital Cities (5407.0) and *Price Index of Materials Used in House Building*, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra (6408.0), or contact Kim Tobin on (06) 252 6198.

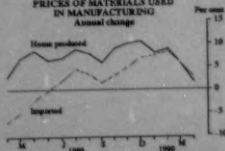
PRICES OF MANUFACTURED GOODS  
1968-69 = 100



PRICES OF MANUFACTURED GOODS  
Annual change



PRICES OF MATERIALS USED  
IN MANUFACTURING  
Annual change



## Prices of manufactured goods continue to increase

Prices of manufactured goods rose by 0.7 per cent in April 1990, slightly less than the 0.9 per cent increase in March 1990.

Approximately 40 per cent of the items included in the index recorded price increases in April 1990, the main ones being meat products and refined lead and zinc.

The table below illustrates the variation in the rate of price change between selected manufacturing sectors.

PRICES OF MANUFACTURED GOODS, APRIL 1990  
Percentage change

Manufacturing sector	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Food and beverages	0.9	6.4
Clothing and footwear	-0.1	6.9
Chemicals and petroleum	1.0	11.3
Basic metal products	2.3	5.7
Fabricated metal products	0.4	8.5
Transport equipment	0.1	5.7
Other industrial machinery	0.6	4.1
<i>All manufacturing industry</i>	<i>0.7</i>	<i>6.6</i>

For further information, order the publication *Price Indexes of Articles Produced by Manufacturing Industry, Australia* (6412.0), or contact Peter Cordy on (06) 252 5541.

## Prices of materials used in manufacturing fall

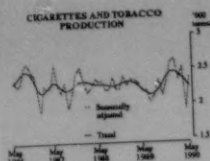
Prices for materials used in manufacturing fell during April 1990, led down by lower prices for crude petroleum and silver-lead concentrates. This fall was partly offset by higher prices for cattle and calves and iron ore.

The 1.3 per cent decrease in this index in April brought its annual increase to 2.0 per cent, down from 5.7 per cent in March.

PRICES OF MATERIALS USED IN MANUFACTURING, APRIL 1990  
Percentage change

Source of material	From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Imported	-1.0	2.9
Home produced	-1.4	1.7
<i>All manufacturing</i>	<i>-1.3</i>	<i>2.0</i>

For further information, order the publication *Price Indexes of Materials Used in Manufacturing Industries, Australia* (6411.0), or contact Kevin Norton on (06) 252 5637.



## Manufacturing activity up

Eighteen of the twenty-five seasonally adjusted commodities covered by the monthly survey of manufacturing production increased between April and May 1990.

The largest increases in manufacturing output were in electric motors (29.6%), tobacco and cigarettes (25.1%) and portland cement (24.9%).

The major falls occurred in the production of rotary type petrol lawn mowers (down 16.7%), wool woven fabric (down 13.0%) and gas available for issue through mains (down 12.4%).

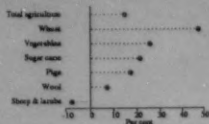
PRODUCTION OF COMMODITIES RECORDING SIGNIFICANT MONTHLY CHANGE  
Seasonally adjusted

Commodity	Unit	Production in May 1990	Percentage change from previous month
<i>Increase —</i>			
Electric motors	'000 tonnes	210	29.6
Tobacco and cigarettes	'000 tonnes	2390	25.1
Portland cement	'000 tonnes	592	24.9
<i>Decrease —</i>			
Lawn mowers	number	20800	-16.7
Wool woven fabric	'000 sq m	571	-13.0
Gas	terajoules	38907	-12.4

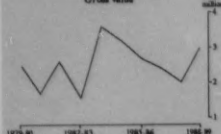
Although showing a rise between April and May, production levels in general remained lower than those twelve months ago. Fifteen of the twenty-five commodities had lower production in May 1990 compared with May 1989 (in seasonally adjusted terms). The major exceptions were, basic iron (up 14.6%), cars and station wagons (15.5%) and cigarettes and tobacco (10.2%).

For further information, order the publication *Production Statistics, Australia, Preliminary* (8301.0), or contact Kevin Squair on (06) 252 5558.

GROSS VALUE OF SELECTED COMMODITIES  
Change from 1987-88 to 1988-89



WHEAT PRODUCTION  
Gross value



## Turnaround for wheat

There was a big increase of 47.6 per cent in the gross value of wheat produced in Australia in 1988-89 — the first increase since 1984-85. Wheat contributed 12.9 per cent to the total gross value of agricultural production for the year, but this was still well below the 1984-85 contribution of 20.7 per cent.

Among other agricultural commodities, sugar cane experienced a record season due to high world prices and increased production, with the total gross value rising by 21.4 per cent.

Unseasonal wet weather reduced the volume of vegetable production in the eastern States and the resultant higher prices contributed to a rise of 25.6 per cent in the total gross value of vegetable production for the year.

The value of wool produced continued its upward trend since 1983-84, increasing in 1988-89 by 7.1 per cent over 1987-88 to \$5,906 million. Wool remained our most valuable agricultural commodity.

The estimated gross value of all agricultural commodities produced in 1988-89 was \$23,120 million, an increase of 14.7 per cent over 1987-88.

GROSS VALUE OF SELECTED AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES  
\$ million

	1987-88	1988-89
Wool	5,517.3	5,906.0
Cattle and calves	3,057.0	3,197.6
Wheat	2,015.7	2,975.9
Vegetables	952.9	1,197.3
Sheep and lambs	803.9	738.3
Sugar cane	627.4	761.8
<b>Total agriculture</b>	<b>20,152.5</b>	<b>23,120.0</b>

For further information, order the publication *Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced, Australia (7503.0)*, or contact Henry Stefanik on (06) 252 5347.





Monthly movements in this series are particularly subject to volatility, even after seasonal adjustment, and greater reliance should be placed on trend estimates.

#### NEW MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS, MAY 1990

	Number	Percentage change from previous month
Original	60,338	27.6
Seasonally adjusted	54,239	0.5
Trend	55,347	0.8

For further information, order the publication *Registrations of New Motor Vehicles, Australia, Preliminary (9301.0)*, or contact Kevin Yeaton on (06) 252 6255.

## Flagship publication

The 1990 edition of *Year Book Australia*, Australia's official statistical record, will be released in the next few weeks, continuing a series which commenced in 1908.

The latest edition consists of over 800 pages of comprehensive information and statistics about various aspects of the economy and social conditions in Australia, both historical and current. *Year Book Australia 1990* has a chronology of principal events, together with detailed statistics on a wide range of topics including:

- ☐ climate, geography and environment
- ☐ population and social conditions
- ☐ industry, business and the economy
- ☐ systems of government and law
- ☐ science and technology
- ☐ culture and recreation
- ☐ international affairs and defence

Statistics are presented in time series format and supported by graphic and explanatory material to assist with understanding and interpreting the data.

Special articles in the 1990 edition cover the theme of conservation, and include features on salinity, The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and endangered species, together with colour photographs.

The publication will be an invaluable reference work for a wide audience, both here and overseas.

The price of the 1990 issue is \$64.95. It will be available in ABS Bookshops soon.

## Inquiries

The ABS supplies a wide range of statistical information:

- ☐ through its bookshops
- ☐ by mail order (including subscription)
- ☐ by facsimile
- ☐ electronically.

To order any of the publications that appear in *Statistics Weekly* or to inquire about the statistics and services available from the ABS, contact Information Services at any of the offices listed below. An Information Consultancy Service in each office provides assistance of a more extensive or complex nature.

### ABS Central Office

PO BOX 10  
BELCONNEN ACT 2616

(06) 252 6627  
FAX (06) 253 1404

### ABS State Offices

NSW (02) 268 4611  
Vic. (03) 615 7000  
Qld (07) 222 6351  
WA (09) 323 5140  
SA (08) 237 7100  
Tas. (002) 20 5800  
NT (089) 81 3456

Any suggestions for improvement to this publication should be addressed to:

Peter Damcevski  
Editor  
*Statistics Weekly*  
(06) 252 6101

## All the week's releases:

27 June to 3 July

### General

Publications Issued in June 1990 (1102.0; \$5.00)  
Statistics Weekly, 28 June 1990 (1318.0; \$3.50)  
Monthly Summary of Statistics, NSW, June 1990 (1305.1; \$12.50)  
Economic Indicators, NSW, June 1990 (1307.1; \$3.30)  
Monthly Summary of Statistics, Qld, June 1990 (1304.3; \$8.00)  
Monthly Summary of Statistics, WA, June 1990 (1305.5; \$8.00)  
Monthly Summary of Statistics, SA, June 1990 (1303.4; \$8.00)

### Demography

Overseas Arrivals and Departures, Aust., 1989 (3404.0; \$15.00)

### National accounts, finance and foreign trade

Balance of Payments, Aust., May 1990 (5301.0; \$12.00)  
Exports, Aust., Monthly Summary Tables, April 1990 (5432.0; \$8.00)  
Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Aust., April 1990 (5609.0; \$8.00)  
Cash Management Trusts, Aust., May 1990 (5635.0; \$3.30)  
Lease Finance, Aust., April 1990 (5644.0; \$5.00)

### Labour statistics and prices

The Labour Force, Aust., May 1990 (6203.0; \$13.00)  
Award Rates of Pay Indexes, Aust., April 1990 (6312.3; \$8.50)  
Industrial Disputes, Aust., March 1990 (6321.0; \$5.50)  
Export Price Index, Aust., April 1990 (6405.0; \$5.00)  
Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building, Eight Capital Cities, April 1990 (6407.0; \$9.00)  
Price Index of Materials Used in House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra, April 1990 (6408.0; \$3.75)  
Price Indexes of Materials Used in Manufacturing Industries, Aust., April 1990 (6411.0; \$8.50)  
Price Indexes of Articles Produced by Manufacturing Industry, Aust., April 1990 (6412.0; \$6.00)  
Import Price Index, Aust., March Qtr 1990 (6414.0; \$5.00)

### Agriculture

Livestock and Livestock Products, Aust., 1988-89 (7221.0; \$15.00)  
Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced, Aust., 1988-89 (7503.0; \$15.00)  
Crops and Pastures, Qld, 1988-89 (7321.3; \$16.00)

### Secondary industry and distribution

Production Statistics, Aust., May 1990, Preliminary (8301.0; \$5.00)  
Production of Transport Equipment, Aust., March 1990 (8363.0; \$3.50)  
Production of Metal Products, Aust., March 1990 (8367.0; \$4.50)  
Building Approvals, Victoria, May 1990 (8731.2; \$8.50)  
Dwelling Unit Commencements Reported by Approving Authorities, Victoria, April 1990 (8741.2; \$8.00)  
Building Activity, Vic., March Qtr 1990 (8752.2; \$8.50)  
Building Approvals, WA, May 1990 (8731.5; \$8.00)  
Dwelling Unit Commencements Reported by Approving Authorities, WA, April 1990 (8741.5; \$8.00)  
Tourist Accommodation, Tas., March Qtr 1990 (8635.6; \$8.50)  
Building Approvals, NT, May 1990 (8731.7; \$5.50)

### Transport

Registrations of New Motor Vehicles, Aust., May 1990, Preliminary (9301.0; \$4.00)  
Motor Vehicle Registrations, Qld, May 1990 (9303.3; \$5.50)  
Motor Vehicle Registrations, Tas., May 1990 (9303.6; \$3.30)

## Calendar of key releases

Expected releases over the fortnight to 17 July 1990

**4** Building Approvals, Australia, May 1990 (8731.0; \$8.50)

**9** Private New Capital Expenditure, Australia, Actual and Expected Expenditure to June 1991, March Quarter 1990 Survey (5626.0; \$8.50)

Job Vacancies and Overtime, Australia, May 1990 (6354.0; \$10.00)

**12** The Labour Force, Australia, Preliminary, June 1990, Preliminary (6202.0; \$8.50)

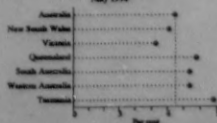
## The latest ...

Changes to key State indicators — consolidated to 3 July 1990

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
— Percentage change from same period previous year —									
New capital expenditure (Dec. qtr 89)*	0.6	5.0	27.4	24.3	-6.9	-34.5	n.a.	n.a.	4.4
Retail turnover (Apr. 90) (trend estimate)	8.8	4.5	7.9	5.7	6.6	9.6	n.a.	8.8	6.9
New motor vehicle registrations (May 90)*	14.3	35.3	10.6	1.0	-8.2	n.a.	5.4	3.4	14.2
Number of dwelling unit approvals (Apr. 90)	-25.4	-38.7	-28.3	-11.5	-55.8	-18.4	7.6	-10.6	-32.5
Value of total building work done (Dec. qtr)	20.3	13.7	15.6	23.4	24.1	9.1	15.9	5.6	17.6
Employed persons (May 90)*	1.8	2.3	3.7	2.4	2.0	5.0	-2.1	3.7	2.4
Capital city consumer price index (Oct. qtr 90)	9.1	8.7	7.8	6.9	9.1	7.2	6.2	8.3	8.6
Average weekly earnings (full-time adult ordinary time) (November 89)	7.9	6.8	3.7	6.9	6.4	4.7	2.6	4.6	6.6
Population (Dec. 89)	0.9	1.3	3.1	1.1	2.8	0.9	-0.1	2.2	1.6
Guest nights in licensed hotels and motels, etc (Sept. qtr 89)	-8.5	19.0	-24.5	13.8	4.5	-6.6	2.1	-6.7	-7.9

\* Seasonally adjusted for States (but not Territories)

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE  
Seasonally adjusted  
May 1990



## Key national indicators - consolidated to 3 July 1990

		Period	Latest figure available		Percentage change (a) on	
			Original	Seasonally adjusted	Previous period	Corresponding period last year
<b>National production</b>						
Gross domestic product	— current prices	\$m Mar. qtr 90	89,263	94,113	2.3	9.8
	— 1984-85 prices		62,050	65,441	1.8	4.4
<b>Industrial activity</b>						
New capital expenditure	— current prices	\$m Mar. qtr 90	6,163	6,947	-2.9	-3.0
	— 1984-85 prices		4,631	5,209	-4.3	-8.7
Expected new capital expenditure		Three months to June 90	8,170	n.a.	n.a.	-2.7
Retail turnover	— current prices	" Apr. 90	6,618	7,104	1.6	7.7
	— 1984-85 prices	Mar. qtr 90	14,013	14,836	0.0	1.4
New motor vehicle registrations		no. May 90	60,338	54,239	0.5	14.2
Dwelling unit approvals (e)		" "	9,993	11,231	-5.9	-27.4
Value of all building approvals (e)		" "	1,853	1,988	0.6	-19.6
Value of total building work done (e)		" "	8,109	7,741	-0.4	17.7
	— current prices	Dec. qtr 89	5,248	5,010	-2.3	6.5
	— 1984-85 prices	Mar. qtr 90	33,133	36,124	2.4	8.3
Manufacturers' sales		Three months to June 90	36,461	n.a.	n.a.	6.3
Expected manufacturers' sales						
<b>Labour</b>						
Employed persons	'000	May 90	7,916.1	7,903.1	0.5	2.4
Unemployment rate †	%	"	6.5	6.5	0.3	0.3
Participation rate †	"	"	64.0	63.8	0.4	0.5
Job vacancies	'000	Feb. 90	60.9	56.1	-15.0	-15.9
Average weekly overtime per employee	hours	"	1.4	1.4	-8.7	-3.5
<b>Prices, profits and wages</b>						
Consumer price index	1980-81 = 100.0	Mar. qtr 90	204.1	n.a.	1.7	8.6
Price index of materials used in manufacturing industries	1984-85 = 100.0	Mar. 90	119.9	n.a.	-1.3	2.0
Price index of articles produced by manufacturing industry	1968-69 = 100.0	Mar. 90	571.5	n.a.	0.7	6.6
Company profits before income tax	\$m	Mar. qtr 90	3,668	4,633	9.0	2.0
Average weekly earnings (Full-time adults; ordinary time)	\$	Feb. 90	524.80	n.a.	1.6	6.6
<b>Interest rates (b) (monthly average)</b>						
90-day bank bills †	% per annum	May 90	15.00	n.a.	-0.1	-3.2
10-year Treasury bonds †	"	"	13.50	n.a.	-0.3	-0.4
<b>Balance of payments</b>						
Exports of merchandise	\$m	May 90	3,936	3,798	-7.0	1.0
Imports of merchandise	"	"	4,115	3,822	-5.8	-11.9
Balance on merchandise trade (c)	"	"	-179	-24	n.a.	95.6
Balance of goods and services (c)	"	"	-458	-279	-22.9	70.0
Balance on current account (c)	"	"	-1,550	-1,343	0.4	28.1
Terms of trade (d)	1984-85 = 100.0	Mar. qtr 90	n.a.	104.0	-4.9	-5.9
<b>Foreign investment</b>						
Net foreign debt	\$m	31 Mar. 90	123,570	n.a.	5.3	15.3
Net foreign liabilities	"	"	163,453	n.a.	2.8	17.5
<b>Exchange rates (monthly average)</b>						
\$US	per \$A	May 90	0.7618	n.a.	-0.3	-1.5
Trade weighted index	May 1970 = 100.0	"	59.8	n.a.	-1.3	0.3
<b>Other indicators</b>						
Population (resident at end of qtr)	million	Dec. 89	16.9	n.a.	0.4	1.6
Overseas visitors	'000	Mar. 90	189	179	2.0	9.1

(a) Based on seasonally adjusted figures where available. (b) Source: Reserve Bank of Australia. (c) For percentage changes, a minus sign indicates an increase in the deficit; no sign means a decrease in the deficit or an increase in the surplus. (d) The ratio of the price of goods and services for exports to that for imports. (e) Later figures released Wednesday, 4 July 1990.  
NOTES: † = change is shown in terms of percentage points. n.a. = not available.

Figures have been taken from a variety of ABS publications. Copies may be obtained from Information Services (see page 10).  
None of the figures shown are preliminary, some final, and some are revisions of previously published figures. Users should check the latest relevant publication or with the ABS Information Services if the status of the statistic is important.

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